

A Special Study: The History of the League of Nations

Purpose:

This exhibit provides a history lesson on the League of Nations, the first truly international civil service organization dedicated to preserving peace and fostering universal co-operation among nations.

Scope:

Chapter 1, Origins of the League, describes the most significant events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries which lead to the formation of the League.

Chapter 2, The Structure of the League, describes the three main bodies of the organization (Council, Assembly and Secretariat), each of the technical and political organs of the League, the agencies of the League, and finally, the physical locations the League of Nations called home.

Chapter 3, The League in Action, considers the most influential events which confronted and defined the League place in history. Included is a critical look at the war years when the League was all but forgotten in Geneva, and the genesis of renewed hope for peace with the transition of international co-operation from the League to the United Nations.



Unsolicited stamp essays honoring the League Anniversary produced by S.A.Courvoisier, Switzerland circa 1933. Produced by photgraveur on ungummed paper. (ex. Gaines)

A Special Note: The philatelic materials in this exhibit provide the viewer with an illustrative history of the League of Nations and of the League postal operations. Special envelope cornercards, addressee information, stamp designs, postal cancellations, auxiliary marking, and the contents of official service mail, are discussed when they are particularly relevant to the subject. Often these items are the only available philatelic evidence of a League office, specialized agency, or activity which help to establish the history of the organization.

Outline

Origins of the League of Nations

- The Hague Peace Conferences
- International Cooperation
- Forerunner Peace Organizations
- The Great War
- National Movements for The League
- Birth of The League of Nations
- The Treaty of Versailles

The Structure of the League of Nations

- The Assembly
- The Council
- The Secretariat
- Technical Organizations
- Political Organizations
- Affiliate Organizations
- League of Nations Societies
- The Home of the League of Nations

The League of Nations in Action

- Health and Social Questions
- Economic Questions
- War Reparations and Capitulations
- International Disarmament
- Conflict and Control
- The War Years
- Transition to the UN
- The End of the League

Highlights of the Exhibit (Items denoted by blue borders)

- 1) Only recorded example of service mail from the ILO - Basel, Switzerland
- 2) Official mail from the Second League Assembly bearing special rectangular date handstamp.
- 3) Earliest recorded usage of official League service mail (London 1919).*
- 4) Service cover from Permanent Court of International Justice bearing 12.5c Star of David issue.
- 5) Service cover from the ILO Governing Body, London England bearing special date handstamp.
- 6) Service cover bearing the auxiliary cancel "Soc. des Nations."
- 7) Post Card from the Portorose conference.
- 8) Registered service cover from the 1933 London Economic Conference bearing special registry date handstamp.
- 9) Service cover from the Locarno Conference.
- 10) Registered post card from the Stresa Borromeo Conference.
- 11) Service cover from Saar Plebiscite Supreme Court.
- 12) Service cover from the Leticia Commission in the Amazon, South America.
- 13) Service Cover from the Election Commission in the Sanjak of Alexandretta.
- 14) Only recorded example of League Treasury origin cachet.*
- 15) Only recorded service cover from the UNCIO on note envelope.*
- 16) Service cover from US delegation to the UN General Assembly canceled on date of approval of transfer of League assets,
- 17) Service cover from the opening session of the First UN General Assembly - London.
- 18) UNEO Service Cover bearing SdN service issues tied by Geneve 10 SdN hand cancel

* Citation Gaines, Arleigh, "United Nations Philately." 1998